

His father, Richard, said as a teen his son developed an avid interest in the military, and he was further inspired by military movies, in particular the HBO series "Band of Brothers." He grew up respecting authority, was "very compliable" and took things in stride which made military life a good fit for him. Therefore, it was a natural for him to enlist in the Army immediately after high school.

While deployed to Iraq in August 2007, he was severely wounded from an improvised explosive device and lost part of his right foot. After nearly a year of grueling rehabilitation and receiving a prosthetic at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, TX he felt a deep sense of patriotism and a burning desire to serve and get back to where he felt he was needed. In 2009 he was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, Air Assault, Fort Campbell, KY where on April 24, 2010 he deployed to Afghanistan.

The last time the family saw him in April 2009 "he was looking forward to his assignment in Afghanistan," his father said. He thought he "was making a difference in the war, and was much needed."

On June 28, 2010, with hundreds of friends in attendance, the family remembered Andrew at Owasso Public School's Mary Glass Performing Arts Center. Before and throughout the service, hundreds of people lined the streets holding up flags in solemn tribute to Andrew.

In 2012, Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin signed Senate Bill 1320 designating the section of highway from 96th Street North to 106th Street North as "Sergeant Andrew R. Looney Memorial Highway."

Andrew was posthumously promoted to Sergeant and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, VA.

SGT Looney is survived by his parents Martha and Cleo Looney, sister Joanna, and brother, Steven who completed a tour in the Navy in December 2009.

Today we remember Army SGT Andrew R. Looney, a young man who loved his family and country, and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

SPECIALIST JARED C. PLUNK

Mr. President, I also wish to remember a true American hero, Army SPC Jared C. Plunk who died on June 25, 2010 serving our Nation in Konar, Afghanistan. SPC Plunk and Army SPC Blair D. Thompson died of wounds sustained when insurgents attacked their unit using rocket-propelled grenades and small-arms fire.

Jared was born August 26, 1982 in Liberal, KS. He grew up in the Oklahoma Panhandle town of Turpin where he played football and graduated high school in 2001 before taking college classes at Seward County Community College.

After relocating to Stillwater, OK, Jared and his brother Justin enlisted

in the Army in August 2006 where they were bunkmates once again in basic military training. After graduation, he married his wife Lindsay and was assigned to 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, Air Assault, Fort Campbell, KY.

Jared's funeral was held July 4, 2010 at the Turpin High School auditorium. Reverend Stan Lehnart remembered him saying "He was not the valedictorian of Turpin. He was not the star of the football team. He was not the boy the girls wanted to sit next to at assemblies in this auditorium. He is the one who gave his life for us to sit here today. He is the one that served his country. He is a hero."

Interment was in the Liberal City Cemetery in Liberal, KS.

Preceded in death by his father, Glen "Tiny" Plunk, Jared is survived by his wife Lindsay, and two sons, 5-year-old Noah and baby Kason, mother Glenda Willard and her husband Gerald of Maryville, TN, brother Justin Plunk and his wife Caitlin of Norman, Oklahoma, brother Jordan Plunk of Maryville, TN, sister Raneé Massoni and her husband Jordon and their son Gavin of Maryville, TN, and sister Michelle Plunk of Maryville, TN.

Today we remember Army SPC Jared C. Plunk, a young man who loved his family and country, and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

ARMY STAFF SERGEANT TRAVIS M. TOMPKINS

Mr. President, I would also like to pay tribute to Army SSG Travis M. Tompkins. Travis tragically died on March 16, 2011 of wounds sustained when insurgents attacked his unit with a rocket propelled grenade in Logar Province, Afghanistan.

Travis was born November 26, 1979 at Fort Sill, OK to Leland and Vickie Tompkins. An active Boy Scout, he graduated from MacArthur High School in 1999 and enlisted in the Army in January 2000.

He was carrying on a tradition of service in his family that dates back to World War I. His father, Leland Tompkins served for more than two decades in an Army career that began during the Vietnam war and ended in the closing days of the Cold War. "He was a working soldier," Leland said. "He was a working leader. He cared about his soldiers. He volunteered for everything."

Moving frequently, Travis' assignments included Fort Sill, OK, Fort Leonardwood, MO, Fort Carson, CO, and Allied Joint Force Command in Brunssum, the Netherlands. He married Candice Brown on March 1, 2001 at Fort Carson, CO and was quickly deployed to Saudi Arabia from September 2001 to March 2002.

He arrived at Fort Polk, LA in June 2009 and was assigned to Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. In October 2011 he deployed to Afghanistan with his unit as a military policeman with the Brigade Special Troops

Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division.

The couple had recently renewed their vows on their 10th anniversary when he was home on leave. "It was the most perfect day," Candy wrote. "He was a wonderful man, an excellent soldier and above all the best father and husband and son and brother. I don't know how I'll ever live without him. He was our world."

A loving husband, father and son, Travis is survived by his wife Candice, two children, Madison and Gianna, parents Leland and Vickie Tompkins of Lawton, OK, sister Jenny Meek and her husband Troy of Fletcher, OK, niece and nephew Megan Meek and Dillon Meek, and his mother and father-in-law Wendy and Tim Brown of Lawton, OK.

His mother Vickie said that the main thing she wanted people who never met him to know is what a great son he was to her and what a wonderful husband he was to his wife Candy, and their children.

Private family funeral services and interment with full military honors were conducted at the Fort Sill National Cemetery, Elgin, OK. Travis was posthumously promoted to Staff Sergeant.

Today we remember Army SSG Travis M. Tompkins, a young man who loved his family and country, and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

TRIBUTE TO TRAVIS MOLLOHAN

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I want to thank a longtime and dedicated member of my staff, Travis Mollohan, and to wish him the best on his next professional venture—as director of State, corporate and community relations for West Virginia University.

Raised by caring parents, Todd and Brenda Mollohan, in the geographic heart of our State, Braxton County, Travis learned from a young age the value of being involved in his community and the importance of being a team player. As a proud Braxton County Eagle, Travis was a member of the high school's award-winning band, speech and debate team and president of the National Honor Society. Travis even volunteered for me during my unsuccessful 1996 gubernatorial run.

Travis graduated from Braxton County High School in 2000 and then attended college at West Virginia University. There, he was treasurer of the WVU Young Democrats, head of the Student Government Association's campus safety committee and studied abroad at Dublin City University in Ireland. Travis volunteered during my successful campaign for Governor in 2004 and began working for me in 2005 as deputy scheduler.

From my first days as the 34th Governor of the great State of West Virginia, my top priority was to deliver excellent customer service to our fellow West Virginians. Travis was ideally suited for my team—he was hard-working, smart and always there to lend a helping hand to those in need.

Travis served my gubernatorial administration in various capacities, and whether it was through tragedy or triumph, Travis represented my office with the utmost distinction.

After winning the unexpired term for the U.S. Senate in 2010, I asked Travis to help me bring our commonsense West Virginia values to Washington. He served as my director of scheduling in 2011, before returning to my State operations as director of outreach. He did an amazing job visiting the beautiful communities of the Mountain State and listening to our citizens' ideas and concerns.

Recently, I asked Travis to serve as my director of constituent services. I was confident yet again that he could do the job because Travis truly understands what West Virginians need—someone who is compassionate, thoughtful and knowledgeable about our state and the complexities of government.

Not a day passes that Travis is not dedicated to making West Virginia a better place to live, work and raise a family.

I am sad to see Travis leave my office, but I am so excited for his future. He has accepted a position with his alma mater, West Virginia University—our State's flagship university. No one is better suited for the task ahead of him than Travis.

WVU has made a significant and positive impact on the Mountain State. It offers a first-class learning experience and its graduates are spread around the world making a difference. But it is more than just an incredible institution of higher learning. WVU's programs and services improve the lives of our citizens and our communities. In our daily lives, we can always do more, and I am so proud to know that Travis will be helping WVU reach the next level.

It is very difficult to imagine my office without Travis, but I know he will bring the same level of excitement, energy, and dedication to his new position as he brought to my office for more than 9 years. He is a responsive, critical thinker who truly cares about our State and fellow citizens. He is a West Virginian through and through and a proud Mountaineer.

Travis has a bright future ahead of him, and I am pleased to say that very soon he will be marrying the love of his life, Lindsey Bennett—from my hometown of Fairmont—who is a beautiful and intelligent young lady. I know that they will have a long and happy life together, and I am proud to say that they will always remain a part of the Manchin family.

THE FIGHT AGAINST ALS

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, this Fourth of July marked the 75th anniversary of the muggy summer afternoon the great Henry Louis Gehrig bid farewell to baseball and introduced Americans to the illness that

would become known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

Lou Gehrig was the only surviving child of a sheet metal worker and a maid—immigrants from Germany. Gehrig brought his family's humble work ethic and steadfastness to his own job, playing first base for the New York Yankees. His career was one that even a Red Sox fan can admire. On June 1, 1925, 4 days before his 20th birthday, he pinch-hit for Pee Wee Wanninger. On June 2, he broke into the starting lineup for good. He would play every single regular and postseason Yankees game until May 2, 1939—2,130 in a row.

"The Iron Horse," as Gehrig was known, didn't just play a lot of baseball, he played superb baseball. He racked up more than 2,700 hits, for a lifetime batting average of .340 and close to 2,000 runs batted in. He had 493 career home runs. His No. 4 jersey, known as "the Hard Number" by the American League pitchers who had to try to get the ball past him, was the first ever retired from Major League Baseball.

Despite his exceptional play, Gehrig was happy to leave the spotlight to teammate Babe Ruth, or later, Joe DiMaggio. "I'm not a headline guy," he once said. "As long as I was following Ruth to the plate, I could have stood on my head and no one would have known the difference."

Lou Gehrig wasn't just great. He was always great. And his competitive spirit inspired Americans during the long years of the Great Depression. But for some unknown reason, his numbers fell off sharply in the 1938 season. He had trouble gripping the bat, running, even walking and sitting. So on the first Tuesday of May 1939, eight games into the season, the Yankee captain took his name off the lineup card. "I'm benching myself, Joe," he told manager Joe McCarthy, "for the good of the team."

A series of tests at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, would reveal that amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a disease that causes nerve cells to stop working and die, was robbing Gehrig's swing of its fabled power.

ALS attacks neurons responsible for controlling voluntary muscles and progresses rapidly. The brain and spinal cord lose the ability to send messages to the muscles of the body, which weaken and atrophy. ALS can impair speaking, swallowing, and breathing. As Gehrig biographer Jonathan Eig explains, the progression of ALS is like "shutting down the body's functions one by one, like a night watchman switching off the factory-floor lights."

Yet on that humid 1939 Independence Day, between the legs of a double-header against the Washington Senators, Lou Gehrig stood before a tangle of microphones at homeplate, bowed more by humility at the adulation of 62,000 Yankee fans, teammates, ball boys, and groundskeepers than by his disease. Clenching his cap in two

hands, the man sportswriter Jim Murray once described as a "Gibraltar in cleats" spoke 278 simple words that still echo in the ears of those of us not even born at the time they were uttered.

"Fans," he began, "for the past two weeks you have been reading about a bad break I got. Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth."

Although there is still much we have to learn about the causes of ALS, we have made great strides in research and treatment since Lou Gehrig took himself out of the game. With the help of Federal grants, advances in genetic research have opened the door to insights about the disease's hereditary nature, and drugs and assistive technology are improving dramatically.

Kreg Palko of Barrington, RI, recently underwent a pioneering surgery to transplant millions of stem cells into his spinal cord, in hopes of undoing the paralyzing effects of his ALS. Until Kreg discovered he had ALS just last year, he was always on the move—as a speedy defensive back at the Air Force Academy, Gulf War pilot—or active skier and surfer. ALS has dampened his mobility but not his competitive spirit. Kreg has volunteered for every clinical trial he can, and whether or not these treatments heal Kreg, he and his wife Elizabeth know this research will benefit future patients.

The heart of the movement for a cure is the dedicated community of advocates, researchers, physicians, and ALS patients. When members of the Rhode Island chapter of the ALS Association visited my office this May, they brought along baseball cards featuring Rhode Islanders living with ALS. I saw in each face courage and dignity equal to Lou Gehrig's.

Senator Jacob Javits of New York, who worked for years after his 1979 ALS diagnosis to improve long-term care and end-of-life policies, said:

Life does not stop with terminal illness. Only the patient stops if he doesn't have the will to go forward with life.

Brian Dickinson refused to let ALS stop him. Editor of the Providence Journal's editorial page and a prize-winning columnist, he had an indomitable spirit. This was the man who once sang "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" outside KGB headquarters on a tour of Soviet Moscow. And although ALS silenced his voice, Brian continued to tap out his column for a number of years, with the help of a special computer in his home. His profound, optimistic observations inspired his readers. "I do believe," he once assured us, "that the capacity for hope can help us meet stiff challenges."

Brian finally lost his battle with ALS in 2002. Last month, the ALS Association Rhode Island Chapter presented the Brian Dickinson Courage Award to Kreg Palko.

As we look back to the day Lou Gehrig reminded us he had "an awful lot to live for," we should renew our